DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 093 054 EA 006 245

AUTHOR	Gajewsky, Stan
TITLE	Accreditation: Review of the Literature and Selected Annotated Bibliography. Reports in Education Number 1. A Monograph.
INSTITUTION	McGill Univ., Montreal (Quebec). Faculty of Education.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	63p.; A related document is EA 006 246
AVAILABLE FROM	Reports in Education, McGill Faculty of Education, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec (Canada) H3A 1Y2 ($3.00, check must accompany order, payable to McGill University)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$3.15 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Accreditation (Institutions); Annotated Bibliographies; Evaluation Criteria; *Literature Reviews; *Secondary Schools; Standards

ABSTRACT

This survey of the literature suggests that accreditation of schools definitionally implies recognition by member institutions, attainment of status, achievement of standards, public confidence, and quality of performance. An examination of statements of purpose confirms that educational improvement is the purpose of utmost importance as concerns accreditation of the secondary school. The requirements or standards of the accrediting agencies fall generally into administrative and supervisory provisions, educational program provisions, facilities and equipment, and related services. From an assertion that self-evaluation is the only truly adequate standard for the judgment of the quality of a school, the survey goes on to examine the forces interacting with the school that enable it to maintain a high level of competence, and concludes with a discussion of the major advantages and criticisms of accreditation. (WM)

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REPORTS IN EDUCATION
Number 1

ACCREDITATION

Review of the Literature
and
Selected Annotated Bibliography

Prepared by
Stan Gajewsky
under the supervision of
Bruce M. Shore
McGill University

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$3.00

REPORTS IN EDUCATION is a monograph series jointly sponsored by the Department of Educational Administration and the Department of Educational Psychology and Sociology, Faculty of Education, McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3A 1Y2.

The preparation of this report was made possible by an agreement with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. A total of four literature surveys were completed during the summer and fall of 1973 on Accreditation, Class Size, Learning Disabilities, and Open Education.

We are grateful for the interest and cooperation of Mr. Malcolm H. Stanley, Superintendent of Curriculum, and Dr. E. George Cochrane, Curriculum Coordinator-Course of Study, Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, in preparing these documents.

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REPORTS IN EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION AND MAIN PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

Since its genesis in 1894, accreditation has had many varied definitions which have, in one way or another, clouded the true concept of accreditation. It is hoped that a basic definition can be gleaned from a survey of the literature and a compilation and amalgamation of the concepts found therein.

I. THE DEFINITION

The term accreditation deals with the term "value", and as such any definition has to incorporate some nuance of value into the meaning of the word.

Kearney, perhaps, provides the simplest definition of accreditation.

> Accreditation is, essentially, the approval of a school by an established and highly reputable educational accrediting organization and the consequent membership of the school in the approving organization.[1]

Therefore, in its simplest form, accreditation denotes membership in an organization, and implies that the accrediting organization has placed some value or status upon the accredited institution.

Statler seems to confirm this definition. He states that accreditation is "the formal process of school recognition."[2]

These first definitions, however reasonable, lack the true meaning of accreditation since they do not divulge enough information concerning the type or quality of education expected of the schools accredited by an

agency.

The National Study of Secondary School Education has proposed a philosophically "open" definition of the term accreditation. They state that accreditation is "a judgement of the effectiveness of the school's efforts to fulfill its purposes."[3]

This definition implies that since education can occur in many ways and under many different circumstances, the school should be the final judge as to what its purposes are and the accrediting agency merely evaluates the efforts made by the school towards those purposes.

The question still remains, however, concerning what basis the accrediting agency will actually use, and who is adequately capable of making a judgement of whether or not a school measures up to some criteria.

The American Council on Education gives two definitions which seem to answer these questions effectively.

> Accreditation is a process of recognizing those educational institutions whose performance and integrity entitle them to the confidence of the educational community and the public.[4]

This first definition implies recognition, therefore, status, as well as acceptance by their educational peers and the community.

The second definition incorporates the concepts of the first but adds considerable explanation to its theoretical framework.

> General accreditation is an expression of confidence by the member institutions of a regional association in an institution's purposes, resources, and performance. To this end, the regional associations employ criteria that describe conditions and principles which characterize educational effectiveness rather than prescribe the means of achieving effectiveness. Quality of education and performance is their goal, not particular patterns or formulas.[5]

Accreditation therefore implies:

a) recognition by member institutions,

b) attainment of status,

c) achievement of standards,

d) public confidence, and

e) quality of performance.

II. MAIN PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

The main purpose of accreditation has not changed drastically since its initiation, but there are several stated purposes which may differ from region to region.

Selden states:

> Initially accreditation was developed as a means of facilitating the admission of students to college, or as educators would say today, of improving the articulation between secondary schools and the colleges and universities. In addition, accreditation was developed so that the better institutions could identify themselves publicly and protect themselves collectively against their shoddy competitors of the academic market place.[6]

These factors are seemingly unimportant today, and the emphasis of accreditation has changed to fit the needs of the educational community so that "educational articulation" between colleges and high schools is no longer a factor to be considered.

Instead, specialized accreditation has been adopted and "their emphasis . . . is on assuring that the purposes and accomplishments of professional programs meet the needs of society and of the profession."[7]

This is a general statement of purpose which shows the pragmatic approach which the accrediting agencies have taken towards the accreditation of schools as a whole.

Jordan presents a statement of purpose of accreditation which seems quite vague, but which includes the important aspect of quality.

> Accrediting procedures for school districts should help to eliminate some of the unknowns. The function of the accreditation agency would be to determine if the school district provides a framework upon which a quality program can be built.[8]

This statement of purpose gives us the first indication that accreditation is meant as a means of school improvement.

Pfnister confirms this theory of school improvement.

> If the criteria by which institutions are evaluated have any relation to quality of educational program, whenever institutions are examined or reviewed they refer to the criteria and they are forced to reconsider their achievements, to determine where improvement is needed, and to work toward

> better educational program. Such a process is, according to this view, one of improving education.[9]

Two studies which were conducted in 1972 also confirm the theory that accreditation is a definite means of school improvement.

Nye's study on the basic assessment of accrediting instruments concerning occupational secondary schools maintains that the Commission on educational institutions "perceives accreditation as being a valuable improvement stimulus for occupational education."[10]

Bishop's study on secondary school accreditation in the United States directly asked the state accrediting agencies for their statements on the purpose of accreditation.

> The principal purpose of secondary school accreditation indicated by state accrediting agencies was to stimulate improvement in the school program. Generally this was accomplished by requiring schools to meet or exceed minimum standards.[11]

Even though school improvement may be expressed as the main purpose of the accreditation system, other varied purposes are also expressed by many authors. These other purposes which will be mentioned incorporate some of the ideas expressed in the early statements of purpose. Richard Adams states three main points in favor of accreditation which seem to be quite inclusive.

> The main purposes of accreditation are to ensure minimum standards of educational honesty and competence, to encourage

> institutional self-improvement, and to protect educational institutions from outside and inside pressures that tend to undermine academic excellence.[12]

These three points mentioned by Adams seem to point out all the major aspects of accreditation quite effectively. Anrig lists a number of purposes of accreditation, five in all, which overlap those of Adams. The only change is the concern with the accrediting institution itself.

Anrig is speaking of the New England Association Accrediting Agency. He states that there are five purposes for the Agency:

1. The upgrading and improvement of the entire program of public school education.

2. The appraisal of local schools at small cost to the community.

3. The support which the New England Association, through its recommendations, would give to local school officials for needed facilities, equipment, and instructional materials.

4. The recognition which would come from institutions of higher learning and from the community as a result of an evaluation program.

5. The strengthening of the New England Association as a result of more stringent membership requirements.[13]

Therefore, from the purposes that have been stated, it can be confirmed that educational improvement is the purpose of the utmost importance regarding accreditation of the secondary school since it is the one common

factor in all of the statements.

The other minor purposes cannot be ignored, however, since many of them seem to play a large role in the ultimate decision to become an accredited institution.

The acquisition of a certain amount of status or recognition as well as public support cannot be considered as mere by-products of the accreditation process.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

[1]W. James Kearney, "Hidden Values in Accreditation Procedures, "The Catholic School Journal, LXIV (September, 1964), 96.

[2]Ellsworth Sheldon Statler, "Recent Growth Patterns of Accreditation of Secondary Schools by the Regional Accrediting Associations," The National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, VL (October 1961), 16.

[3]Evaluative Criteria (Washington D.C.: National Study of Secondary School Education, 1960), 25.

[4]American Council on Education, Accredited Institutions of Higher Education (New York, Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1965), xii.

[5]Ibid., p. xiii.

[6]William K. Selden, "The Relative Unimportance of Regional Accreditation," The Journal of Teacher Education,XIII (September, 1962) 320.

[7]American Council on Education, op. cit., p. xiii.

[8]K. Forbis Jordan, "Proposed: Accreditation By District," Phi Delta Kappan,IVL (May, 1965), 457.

[9]Allan P. Pfnister, "Regional Accrediting Agencies at the Crossroads," The Journal of Higher Education,XLII (October, 1971), 570.

[10]Phares Steavens Nye, "A Basic Assessment of the Accrediting Instruments, Activities and Procedures Used By the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools" (unpublished Ed. D. Thesis, North Carolina State University at Raleigh, 1972), Abstract.

[11]Vernal Reid Bishop, "Study of Secondary School Accreditation in the United States" (unpublished Ed. D. Thesis, University of Idaho, Idaho, 1972), Abstract.

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FOOTNOTES Cont'd.

[12]Richard P. Adams et al., "Should Accreditation Procedures be Extended to Include Institutional Quality Ratings?" The Journal of Higher Education, XXXIV (April, 1963), 220.

[13]Gregory R. Anrig, "The New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and Accreditation of the Small Secondary School," The National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, (February, 1966), 94.

CHAPTER II

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA OF ACCREDITATION

It has often been discussed that any institution must develop its own principles and standards in order to maintain a clear view of its purpose. The case of accreditation is no different. Its standards and principles are clear cut, even though they may vary among the different regions.

I. STANDARDS

The elements which determine accreditation of any institution are quite simple. Meder suggests that there are three basic points involved.

> First, there must be standards, criteria, or descriptions of characteristics of educational quality in terms of which an institution is appraised. Second, there must be an evaluation of the institution in terms of these characteristics. Third, there must be a judgement of the adequacy of the extent to which the institution meets these characteristics, criteria, or standards.[1]

In this section, the first element which Meder has mentioned will be dealt with.

Bishop categorized the requirements or standards of the accrediting agencies into four components:

> "(1) Administrative and Supervisory provisions.
>
> (2) Educational Program Provisions
>
> (3) Facilities and Equipment, and
>
> (4) Related Services."[2]

While these areas are very general, each element is broken down

into many sub-headings which comprise the basic standards of all the accrediting agencies which Bishop studied.

An additional breakdown of these same standards includes the following elements:

(1) financial stability

(2) effectiveness of administration

(3) adequacy of the general facilities

(4) quality of student personnel programs

(5) appropriateness of overall programs

(6) general strength of the faculty

(7) quality of instruction.[3]

The above standards are, more or less, the prerequisites which any school must have in order to become an accredited institution.

As was previously mentioned, standards vary from region to region, but there are common factors which each of the accrediting agencies have. Below, are the standards which the New England Association has adopted for their accrediting procedures. These standards are relatively universal, insofar as they contain most of the major points listed as important aspects of an accredited school.

STANDARDS OF THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION[4]

1. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES -- the school shall have a clearly stated educational philosophy which shall be supported by definitely stated objectives designed to meet the needs of the students and the community served.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDIES -- the school shall have a carefully planned program of studies and activities consistent with its stated philosophy and objectives.

3. GUIDANCE SERVICE -- the school shall have an organized and coordinated guidance service to aid students in meeting educational, vocational, health, moral, social, civic, and personal problems.

4. THE LIBRARY -- the school shall have a library which is the center for resource material for every aspect of the school program. There shall be a professionally competent staff, an adequate collection of books and periodicals, auditory and visual aids, and other resource material. These facilities shall be effectively used in the educational program.

5. THE SCHOOL STAFF - the school shall have a professional staff well qualified in character, health, and personality, and competent in various educational and related services. Staff members shall have a sympathetic understanding of youth and a desire to continue professional growth. The staff shall be sufficient in number and adequately paid. It shall be a group motivated by high ideals and working together to attain the objectives of the school. The school shall have an adequate number of employees for non-professional services.

6. RECORDS - an adequate system of student records and of permanent files shall be safely maintained. These shall include the cumulative record of attendance, progress in school, and results of objective tests. Student schedule cards and a master schedule of each teacher shall be maintained. An adequate system of records of faculty and administrative staff shall be maintained.

7. ADMINISTRATION - the principal or headmaster, although accountable to higher authority, shall be responsible head and professional leader of the school. He shall interpret to his superintendent, to his board of control, and to his constituency the place of the school

in the life of the community. The board of control shall be responsible for the determination of policy and for the approval of appointments and expenditures. Under no circumstances shall the board perform the functions of the educational administrator.

8. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT - the plant and equipment shall be adequate for the progress of the school and shall be operated to assure the safety and health of the students, faculty, and non-professional staff.

9. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS - school and community relations are of such importance in the development of a good secondary school that an appropriate program for promoting effective relations between school and community shall be maintained and constantly improved.

10. FINANCIAL SUPPORT - financial support of the school shall be adequate to sustain the educational program, including activities, consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the school and with the standards of the New England Association for public secondary schools.

11. SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE - the school shall have an appropriate atmosphere which indicates that an effective educational program prevails.

These standards are defined in great detail in Evaluative Criteria,[5] which explains specific accreditation requirements based upon these eleven standards.

It seems, however, that these standards would inhibit an institution more than help it, since these standards tend to build a framework for a school which cannot be easily changed. Standards can so easily come to be treated as maxima (ultimate goals) rather than minima.

Ferster did a study on the criteria of accrediting agencies and came to the conclusion that:

> The criteria which emerged was essentially process criteria. Little attention was paid to the products of the educational system.

> The criteria being used were essentially factory criteria, assessing resources, faculty, administration, but paying little attention to student outcome. Recommendations were usually quite specific, calling for refinements in existing patterns, rather than for substantive changes in patterns of education.[6]

Thus, the standards set down by the various accrediting agencies could possibly prove too rigid insofar as total change could never be approved by any agency which upheld these standards.

Wilson does not totally agree with this opinion, however, since he believes that the very standards themselves help to initiate change.

> One standard of the Association's Commission on Secondary Schools which states that, "Member schools are encouraged to carry on active experimental programs designed to improve the school," in itself, is of considerable help to principals as they attempt to initiate change. Citing this standard often enables the school leader to assure his community and staff that a reputable professional group has knowledge of what is planned and a continuing concern with its sound evaluation.[7]

Williams, on the other hand, seems to be disenchanted with the whole concept of standardization in the accreditation process.

> It is flexibility rather than standardization which we should seek. A more recent study (by the Fund for the Advancement of Education) goes on to declare that in order to adapt itself to new situations and new demands imposed by a changing society, our educational system must be capable of

> more rapid change than can usually be achieved within existing institutions, which by and large tend to resist change.[8]

Therefore, the whole concept of a set of standards comes into question, and this question is an important one in the field of accreditation since standards are the cornerstones of the entire accrediting process.

II. PRINCIPLES OF THE CRITERIA

The principles which are the bases of accreditation are quite different from the standards which they have formulated. Instead of strict adherence to standards, the philosophy behind the accreditation program is highly innovative. It stresses originality, freedom and initiative.

Collins states that "one of the major claims made for accreditation is that it stimulates a comprehensive self-study that is evaluative in nature."[9] Thus, the basic premise of accreditation is improvement.

Pfnister establishes three principles that seem to form the framework of the philosophy of accreditation. The three principles are:

1. In the accrediting process no distinction is to be made regarding levels of quality. An institution is either worthy of being included in the membership of the association or it falls short of the requirements. The status is that of being accredited or not being accredited.

2. An institution is evaluated as a whole. That is to say, regional associations emphasize the general rather than the specialized functions. Acceptance for membership implies that the institution as a whole rather than any particular program or unit is being accredited.

> 3. Each institution is accredited in the light of its own purposes. The regional associations do not presume to determine purposes for the institution - yet, each regional association has required an institution applying for or holding membership to show that it has a basic program of general or liberal education.[10]

We can see, therefore, that the standards that were previously cited have grown out of these three basic principles. Even though the standards themselves are quite dogmatic, the spirit with which they are used is quite functional. If the standards are used as tools or mere guidelines, they can be used to advantage. If, however, the standards are used as qualitative measuring instruments, they can only be harmful to innovative and creative education.

> Basic institutional accreditation should provide for pluralism rather than for singularity. No one set of requirements can serve well the diversity of secondary schools and their associated conditions across the nation, to say nothing of accredited schools abroad.[11]

From this point of view standards, such as represented by provincial matriculation examinations could have the effect of constraining innovation, despite the acceptable desire to assure minimum services everywhere. Strategies have to be sought which will allow both goals to exist simultaneously.

Ziemba, in his study concerning the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary

Schools, states that the Commission has "demonstrated a growing awareness of its role as being less and less policing in nature and emphasized more and more its role of assistance."[12]

His study revealed the following eight trends concerning the Commission on accreditation:

1. from demanding conformity to encouraging individuality;
2. from encouraging passive institutions to expecting active institutions;
3. from quantitative standards to qualitative standards;
4. from a theoretical basis to a practical basis;
5. from a static organization to a dynamic organization;
6. from emphasis on institutional status to emphasis on institutional growth;
7. from emphasis on the structural aspects of an institution to an emphasis on the educational process;
8. from limited membership and types of institutions to relatively unlimited membership and types of institutions.[13]

It seems, therefore, that American accreditation agencies are re-evaluating their criteria considerably, or, at least, emphasizing the spirit of the rules and standards rather than the letter of the law.

The American Council on Education seems to sum up the concepts of this chapter quite well.

> General accreditation does not imply similarity of aims, uniformity of process, or comparability of graduates among institutions. Instead, it indicates that, in the judgement of the responsible agents of the academic community, an institution's own goals are soundly conceived; that its educational programs have been intelligently devised, are competently conducted, are capable of fulfilling the goals the institution seeks, and are, in fact, accomplishing them substantially; and that the institution is so organized, staffed, and supported that it should continue to merit such confidence in the foreseeable future.[14]

Thus, it seems clear that standards are necessary to serve as an evaluative criteria of an institution's assets, but not of an institution's worth.

Any secondary school should be given the chance to prove itself to its peers, and not necessarily to government agencies or other outside influences. If a school is capable of setting its own goals and philosophy it is entirely capable of establishing criteria for the survival and well being of its students and community. With accrediting agencies being used as helpful guides, secondary schools should be able to formulate intelligent, capable and creditable programs of study as well as adequate facilities to enable the teachers to instruct properly.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

[1]Albert E. Meder, "Accrediting Procedures of NCATE," School and Society, XCI (April, 1963), 192.

[2]Vernal Reid Bishop, "Study of Secondary School Accreditation in the United States" (unpublished ED.D. thesis, University of Idaho, Idaho, 1972), p. Abstract.

[3]Editors, "The Role of professional Associations, Accrediting Agencies, and State Departments of Public Instruction," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, LIII (January 1969), 44 - 45.

[4]Gregory R. Anrig, "The New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and Accreditation of the Small Secondary School," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, L (February, 1966), 92 - 93.

[5]Evaluative Criteria (Washington, D.C.: National Study of Secondary School Education, 1960).

[6]Herbert Vernon Ferster, "Criteria for Excellence: A Content Analysis of Evaluation Reports by a Regional Accrediting Association" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, 1971), p. Abstract.

[7]Raymond G. Wilson, "The Regional Accrediting Associations and the Smaller High Schools", National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, L (February, 1966), 79 - 80.

[8]Richard P. Adams et al., "Should Accreditation Procedures be Extended to Include Institutional Quality Ratings?" The Journal of Higher Education, XXXIV (April, 1963), 224.

[9]John J. Collins, "Accreditation - Aims and Perceptions," Junior College Journal, XXXVIII (December, 1967), 20.

[10]Allan O. Pfnister, "Regional Accrediting Agencies at the Crossroads," The Journal of Higher Education, XLII (October, 1971), 564.

[11]Stephen Romine, "Accreditation: A Basic Step Toward Educational Improvement," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, LV (May 1971), 142.

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FOOTNOTES Cont'd.

Walter Joseph Ziemba, "Changes in the Policies and Procedures of the Accrediting Process of the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1909 - 1958" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Michigan, Michigan, 1966), p. Abstract.

Ibid.

American Council on Education, Accredited Institutions of Higher Education (New York, Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1965), xiii.

CHAPTER III

QUALITY RATINGS AND EXAMINERS

It has often been stated, that in the area of education, quality is an undefinable term which is often used to describe a nebulous concept which can never be validated. If this is the case, the claim that accreditation produces the environment for quality education cannot be either accepted or rejected without further qualification.

I. QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION

For the most part, accreditation has been misconstrued by the public concerning the main purpose of the process of accrediting various institutions.

Pfnister states:

> While accrediting agencies emphasize that their primary role is that of assisting member institutions to improve, the public tends to think of the role as that of certifying a certain level of quality. As the public concern becomes greater, the accrediting agency takes on more of the characteristics of a public utility commission with a responsibility for protecting the public.[1]

This, obviously was not the image which the accrediting agencies wished to portray. What makes the situation even more difficult is that the standard of quality of an educational institution is extremely difficult to judge or ascertain.

The ratings given by an accrediting agency to an institution are in question, since quality is the key to any educational process, not necessarily a quantitative score. These qualitative ratings, however, are somewhat suspect.

> The main question is whether the ratings have real validity or are merely the product of what one or more persons believe is the quality level of the institution. The important point is that if institutional ratings are to have value, they must be based upon the performance of the institutions - not upon such factors as the size of the endowment fund, the beauty of the buildings, or the size of the institution.
>
> The chief determinants of institutional ratings should be measures of student and faculty achievement. More specifically, the changes produced in students and the contributions to knowledge made by the faculty should be the basic criteria applied in arriving at institutional ratings.[2]

Thus, while some criteria are provided for the measurement of quality, the topic is still far from being solved. William K. Selden of the National Commission on Accrediting also maintains that accreditation ratings are not exempt from gross error.

> It was recognized that accrediting is a fallible method which relies on gross measurements to identify quality in education . . . there must be a more widely accepted definition of quality in education and further refinement of the techniques and methods of identifying such quality.[3]

There are, however, some dangers in developing quality ratings. Inspections must be made by teams of specialists representing various professional groups with specific interests. Who is to say that the interests of a specific group of individuals is a strong basis for a quality rating of a specific institution?

Peterson points out another danger concerning the quality rating.

> Something surely can be done about the measurement of quality, but agreement must first be secured that quality ratings are for internal consumption and self-improvement, not for invidious institutional comparisons.[4]

These two perils can be a disastrous consequence of hasty rating schemes which are then made public. Peterson goes on to say, however, that,

> If we are willing to view the measurement of quality as a private affair designed to foster institutional self-scrutiny and amendment, a return to the assessment of quality is not only possible but imperative.[5]

Lack of an adequate definition for quality also leads to the curbing of new ideas and innovations in program development. Selden cites a specific example:

> For initial accreditation, conformity to what has been established as good educational practice will be more readily recognized and approved than a distinctive, new type of institution for which there is no precedent. Support for this approach is given by the fact that we lack a widely accepted definition of minimum quality in education and adequate techniques and tools to measure quality.[6]

Williams confirms Selden's statement concerning the stifling effect of accreditation on innovation.

> Institutions which would model themselves after agency blueprints in order to reach a higher plateau of quality would in all probability not be looking forward, imaginative, and progressive (however ominous this last word may sound to some readers).[7]

A quality rating is made at a specific point in time in an institution which is constantly changing. A point like teacher mobility is a major factor in the quality of teaching programs. Peterson states:

> It takes years to build departmental quality; it can be destroyed within a short time by forces to some extent beyond the control of the institution. With such impermanence, quality ratings are so ephemeral as to make their validity suspect.[8]

However, even with these difficulties which provide apparently huge obstacles to accreditation, the procedure still functions. It does so, primarily because of the individuals involved in the actual judgement of institutions.

II. EXAMINERS OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

Bayshore has done a study of the selection, training and evaluation of examiners in various accrediting associations. His findings, though limited to general statements, are quite revealing. The major conclusions of this study were:

1. Association staff members select examiners who have been certified as professionals and therefore, may be presumed to possess already the judgement skills and experience critical in the accrediting process. The identification and selection of examiners was a highly informal process.

2. Seven of the eleven accrediting associations did not have formal examiner training programs but instead depended upon printed materials, personal contacts between the association official and the examiner, experienced team chairmen, and actual visitation experience to train the examiners. The formal training programs were designed to increase the examiner's judgemental competence to do what was required in the accrediting process.

3. The accrediting associations with one exception had evaluation procedures to determine which individuals were competent to make the judgements required in the accrediting visit. These evaluation procedures were highly informal, often verbal, and did not exist in written form. The one exception had a formalized, required evaluative process.

4. The duties and responsibilities of the examiner in the accrediting process, as stated by the accrediting association, are clearly communicated and understood by the examiner prior to an accrediting visit.

5. There are identifiable skills, knowledge and attitudes which are essential elements in the selections, training, and continued use of examiners in accrediting associations.

> 6. The members of the examining teams of accrediting associations are well prepared to make the kinds of judgements required of them at the examining visit largely by virtue of their individual professional competence, previous experiences and positions held, and their present position.[9]

It can be readily noted therefore, that the examiners are for the most part, highly skilled people who are quite capable of making competent decisions regarding the state of a specific educational institution.

The addition of professional people from all walks of life is a definite step towards the development of a definitive statement concerning the "quality" of a school. Selden, when speaking of the examiners states:

> They should review more carefully all aspects of an institution being accredited. Furthermore, they should recognize that their primary obligations are now to society and not to their institutional members. The inclusion of competent public members on the boards and commissions of the regional associations would indicate recognition of their social obligations and would likely stimulate needed changes in the governance of institutional accreditation.[10]

So it seems, that until "quality" has been defined very explicitly, and examiners know exactly where to look to find this attribute, the entire process of accreditation remains subjective.

Meder makes a very valid point:

> The process of accreditation is largely subjective. This is true whether the standards or criteria are explicitly stated or are derived by implication from descriptive statements of educational quality. For, in the case of any criterion applied in any specific situation, one almost always will find

> that it is met only "in part" or "to some extent." Rarely can one say that a criterion or standard is fully met or not met at all.[11]

Therefore, are we then back where we started? Does this mean that education cannot be evaluated for lack of an adequate tool?

He goes on to state that each school has its own accrediting system:

> The necessity for subjective judgement is recognized in the procedures normally employed in evaluating an institution for accreditation. Many accrediting agencies begin with a self-evaluation report by the institution. In terms of standards, guides, questionnaires, and statements of qualities of excellence, an institution evaluates itself. Most institutions make every effort to be honest and objective but there is no doubt that these self-evaluations do have some of the characteristics of ex parte documents. The self-evaluation report is the brief for the applicant, inevitably and inherently.[12]

Thus, self-evaluation remains the key to the entire process of accreditation. The remaining process serves merely as a rubber stamp which endorses the self-evaluation. Apparently, Meder believes that the institution itself is a much better judge of its own quality of education.

It seems that the process of self-evaluation can bring to the school the insight which it needs to advance itself towards educational excellence. Hopefully, self-evaluation would provide the school with its own framework for progress and it would not need the suggestions, sanctions and approval of an accrediting team.

Therefore, it can be maintained that the accrediting process is, in essence, an approved method of self-evaluation by a particular school with

the particular goal of school-wide improvement which is then inspected and graded, to some extent, both qualitatively and quantitatively: Qualitatively, insofar as the school upholds or meets the standards of the accrediting agency regarding instruction, and quantitatively, insofar as the school has the facilities to provide this instruction.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

[1]Allan O. Pfnister, "Regional Accrediting Agencies at the Crossroads," The Journal of Higher Education, XLII (October, 1971), 569.

[2]Richard P. Adams et al., "Should Accreditation Procedures be Extended to Include Institutional Quality Ratings?" The Journal of Higher Education, XXXIV (April, 1963), 224.

[3]Ibid., p. 223.

[4]Ibid., p. 227.

[5]Ibid.

[6]William K. Selden, "The Relative Unimportance of Regional Accreditation," The Journal of Teacher Education, XIII (September, 1962), 321.

[7]Richard P. Adams et al., op. cit., p. 223.

[8]Ibid., p. 227.

[9]Gerald Carl Bayshore, "The Selection, Training, and Evaluation of Examiners in Selected Accrediting Associations" (unpublished Ed.D. thesis, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, 1971), p. Abstract.

[10]William K. Selden, "A New Translation of an Old Testament," Educational Record, IL (Winter, 1968), 114.

[11]Albert E. Meder, "Accrediting Procedures of NCATE," School and Society, XCI (April, 1963), 192.

[12]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

ACCREDITATION: A PROCESS OF SOCIAL CONTROL AND PROFESSIONAL SANCTION

Since, as was pointed out in the last chapter, self-evaluation was reported to be the only truly adequate standard for the judgement of the quality of a school, it remains to be seen what forces interact with the school to enable the school to maintain a high level of competence. The evidence is that the process of accreditation is a very good "watchdog" of the quality of any institution.

It should be pointed out however, that while standards should be maintained, they should be maintained only at a very local level. Province-wide standards such as the New York Regents exams only serve to cut off initiative, adequate freedom, and the right of an institution to determine its own raison d'être.

I. SOCIAL CONTROL

The argument brought up against accreditation many times is that if the government loses control over the standards of the secondary schools, then it must follow that those schools will not maintain standards high enough to satisfy the universities, colleges and various professions which depend upon an adequate educational standard. The literature seems to prove contrarily.

Social control processes are inevitable. Wiley and Zald state:

> By definition, to the extent that an organization is caught up in a larger society it is subject to social control

> processes -- it exists in a societal web which applies sanctions (negative or positive). However, different organizations are subject to different mechanisms and processes of control depending on several factors; the level of performance of the organizations, the centrality of the substantive nature of the norm (standard of performance) involved, and the structure of inter-organizational relations occurring in the society and in the particular institutional sphere.[1]

It seems evident, therefore, that governmental regulators such as province-wide exams are totally unnecessary since other societal forces will retain high standards of educational excellence. Wiley and Zald continue to speak on certification, which, they claim, is a strong process of educational regulation.

> The certification association is a peculiarly western and especially American device of social control. It is a mechanism of self-regulation that develops in societies where hierarchical regulation is weak and where relevant professional groups believe market forces are inadequate for the maintenance of desired standards.[2]

At present, hierarchichal regulation is strong in Québec education, but social forces (such as syndicalism) might well permit them to be weakened, allowing other pressures to act more directly to maintain standards.

The professions, especially, are greatly concerned with the standards of excellence for which the schools are primarily responsible. If government standards were rescinded, professional associations would be

quick to point out those institutions which they would endorse as worthy schools. These associations, then, would become accrediting associations, but perhaps, only concerned with their own profession. Law firms would probably be little interested in an institution primarily known for its technically oriented programs.

Each profession, however, would be able to develop its own standards for the school in which they are interested. This interest by the professions would, in itself, be an extremely powerful sanction which would prove very detrimental to any school which refused to undergo a thorough self-evaluation concerning its programs. Some type of certification or accreditation is a necessary item according to the professions. Zook and Haggerty state that the main reason for the development of accrediting agencies was "the voluntary attempts of professional or scientific groups to guide and control the conditions under which several educational efforts may be carried on."[3]

This interest in education is not a hindrance to the professions and universities which sponsor these agencies, instead, it is an enormous asset. Selden, of the National Commission on Accrediting states:

> One of the features of a profession is its rightful concern with the qualifications of its members; and their education obviously has an immediate bearing on their qualifications.[4]

The professions, therefore, seem to be in a much better position

to accredit institutions than government agencies because the professions truly have a vested interest in the products of the institutions which are accredited.

Government agencies would tend to look for general principles and theoretical frameworks which would cover all areas of the public sector. The concept seems admirable, but hardly practical.

Accreditation involves social control by its very nature, and does not need government sanctions to help institutions maintain standards. Wiley and Zald state that "accreditation, because of the uniformity of agreement among members and because the membership controls vital positions and opportunities, places the rejected applicant at considerable disadvantage with regard to affiliated institutions."[5]

Thus, government sanctions are meaningless when an accrediting agency or other such professional agency with affiliations with the major universities has control over the secondary school education.

We are not speaking of merely substituting an accrediting agency and its sanctions for the government sanctions, but also all that accreditation implies. Government control cannot adequately supervise the quality of a secondary school. It can only judge the finished student after the secondary school has educated him. This post hoc method of evaluation is useful only for terminal students. An ongoing evaluation of the quality of education in the school itself would provide much more useful information

since this method would be an evaluation of the ability of the students to learn in a specific environment.

The learning process itself, is based upon the assumption that students learn better in suitable environments. An evaluation of these environments is what is proposed by accrediting agencies. We have already seen that evaluative criteria exist for the competent evaluation of secondary schools. It remains only to put these criteria into practice.

Selden notes that:

> When it comes to the professions, whose work mixes a commitment of service to the public with its scientific interests, the government is usually content to leave the control of standards to the professional society as a matter of practice, but in theory (and sometimes in practice) it insists on maintaining the right to exercise control.[6]

Quebec is an example of the government which exercises considerable control over the standards of the secondary schools through the provincial examinations. It is becoming more and more evident, however, that universities, colleges and the professions are looking to the marks granted by the individual institutions when considering the student's acceptance or rejection into their membership.

II. THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE PROFESSIONS: THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

The challenge proposed to educators therefore, is to throw off the mantle of protectiveness which the government has so freely bestowed.

The Accrediting agencies in the United States have been operating effectively for over seventy years and the minor inconsistencies have been overcome. It seems evident that accreditation is a necessity since no one institution can provide competent students for all fields of learning. An evaluation of the educational procedures and assets of the schools must be undertaken.

The key to success, however, as Jordan states is,

> the level of support and cooperation gained from lay and professional interests at the local level and from college and university people. The united efforts of these groups would provide the impetus for launching the program.[7]

It is a proven fact, that the public has provided real interest in the evaluation of schools. Pfnister states that not only does the general public seem to be interested in having more than simply information concerning accredited institutions, but, in fact, individuals and groups of individuals have taken it upon themselves to develop rating scales and to publish the results of their assessments.[8]

The interest in accreditation is there. It remains for the professions and the universities to provide the necessary promulgation of the idea through to government levels.

Accreditation would not mean lack of control to the government, but simply an expansion of the standards that are already in force throughout the province. The accrediting agencies could be in constant

contact with government offices and the process of accreditation would only mean the abolition of a central standard (province-wide examinations) and the adoption of individual evaluative techniques. These techniques could be agreed upon by university officials, the professions and government so that secondary schools could be evaluated according to their own goals and procedures of education.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

[1]Mary Glenn Wiley and Mayer N. Zald, "The Growth and Transformation of Educational Accrediting Agencies: An Exploratory Study in Social Control of Institutions," Sociology of Education, XLI (Winter, 1968), 38.

[2]Ibid.

[3]George F. Zook and M.E. Haggerty, Principles of Accrediting Higher Institutions, Vol. I, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1936, p. 9.

[4]William K. Selden, "The Relative Unimportance of Regional Accreditation," Journal of Teacher Education, XIII (September, 1962), 324.

[5]Wiley and Zald, op. cit., p. 39

[6]William K. Selden, "A New Translation of an Old Testament," Educational Record, IL (Winter, 1968), 113.

[7]K. Forbis Jordan, "Proposed: Accreditation by District," Phi Delta Kappan, XLVI (May, 1965), 458.

[8]Allan O. Pfnister, "Regional Accrediting Agencies at the Crossroads," Journal of Higher Education, XLII (October, 1971), 568.

CHAPTER V

MAJOR ADVANTAGES AND CRITICISMS OF ACCREDITATION

Now that the processes involved in accreditation have been briefly explained, it is imperative that the major advantages and disadvantages of the system be reviewed. Many of these have already been mentioned in passing throughout the paper, but below are the main points of the arguments.

I. MAJOR ADVANTAGES

Instead of presenting the list of advantages in the form of an essay, a list of the points will follow. These advantages may overlap a great deal, but they vary enough for us to differentiate among them.

1. In striving for accreditation or approval the entire staff of a school literally is obliged to formulate together a specifically detailed statement of purpose for the existence of the school. Vague generalities are replaced by concrete aims, and methods to achieve these aims. These concerted efforts are part of a professional soul-searching which all institutions must make if they are to progress. A school without a definite philosophy can obtain one; a school with a philosophy can reexamine, reevaluate, and update the existing one. The how, the why, and the wherefore are determined in the light of a school's facilities, its staff, and especially the type of student the school strives to educate.[1]

The establishment of a philosophy with definite aims and objectives

is an absolute necessity for an accredited school. Therefore, the first advantage is recognized as a direct result or effect of accreditation.

> 2. A thorough self-evaluation is undertaken according to detailed guidelines provided by the accrediting association. The school judges itself in degrees varying from poor to excellent. It is precisely in this phase that the school personnel begin to see themselves in true perspective.[2]

The necessity of detailed self-evaluation is also a direct effect of accreditation. Apparently, it is through this evaluation procedure that most changes in educational procedures are made. This constructive criticism of one's own system enables a staff to reevaluate their methods, their programs and their facilities effectively.

> 3. Furthermore, they (the school staff) gain a wider focus of the entire school enterprise. They see the whole picture of all departments working to achieve common goals, not just their own little worlds.[3]

A universal outlook is developed. This enables the staff to work more as a team of professionals striving for a single purpose rather than a number of individuals whose only interest remains within the confines of their own classrooms.

> 4. How often in today's world of changing staffs and administrations are plans and projects marked by consistent follow-through? . . . However, with concrete recommendations and proposals written in black and white, the poss-

> ibility of sustained efforts to bring about their realization is more likely, even though the persons working at them are not always the same. Certainly there is something good to be said for a procedure which allows intelligent, long-range planning to be fulfilled, and which constantly urges us onward to achieve worthwhile goals.[4]

Consistent follow-through is provided for through the process of accreditation in order to maintain the level of education which the institution is capable of. Strong sanctions are maintained for the schools which do not maintain a pattern of development and planning.

In conclusion, therefore, the advantages can be summed up quite effectively. The American Council on Education states:

> It helps intensify each institution's efforts toward maximum educational effectiveness. The accrediting process of most agencies requires each institution to examine its own concepts, goals, and operations, supported by the expert criticism of a visiting team which later reports back to the institution through the accrediting agency. Moreover, since the accredited status of an institution is reviewed periodically -- normally, at least once every ten years or after a major change of purpose or program -- the institution is encouraged toward continual self-study and improvement.[5]

Also, Kearney states further:

> There is no doubt that the frequent exacting and laborious self-evaluation and preparation leading to accreditation will vastly improve a school.[6]

Thus, overall improvement through the use of the process of

accreditation is seen as a goal which can not only be attained, but is the fundamental concept of accreditation.

II. MAJOR DISADVANTAGES

The disadvantages of accreditation are very general but quite important.

> 1. The main problem of accreditation is that of accomplishing these purposes (ensuring minimum standards of honesty and competence, encouraging self improvement, and to protect educational institutions from outside and inside pressures) without imposing arbitrary and inappropriate requirements on the institutions.[7]

The establishment of standards must be sought which are effective and yet which still enable the institution the freedom to fulfill their goals and purposes.

> 2. The chief difficulty cited usually is that of securing and holding qualified teachers and such specialized persons as librarians and counselors.[8]

The maintaining of a competent staff is essential in accreditation, since the programs developed and entire educational process of a school can be changed from one year to the next because of a change in staff. Any drastic changes in staff could change the entire basis upon which the school was initially judged and evaluated.

> 3. The fundamental criticism, however, goes far deeper than either of these two. For any agency to demand uniformity in educational practice all

> over the country, and thus stifle experimentation, cannot but impede progress. In a field so rapidly changing and so full of uncertainties as is education, anything which tends to halt progress and hold practice at the point it has now reached, must prove hurtful in the long run.[9]

The impeding of experimentation and progress is a major cited disadvantage of accreditation. This criticism, however, is a one-sided view of the term "standard." It has been clearly shown that the attainment of standards does not necessarily imply uniformity since the school itself sets its own goals. The standards with which the critics of accreditation are concerned deal with "factory assets" such as facilities, personnel and plant management.

III. CRITIQUE OF ACCREDITATION

Collins made a study of eighteen claims made by accrediting agencies. His research was done in seven California schools. The findings of his research are presented below in point form.[10]

1. As far as accreditation stimulating a comprehensive evaluative study, the evidence indicates that it just doesn't happen; the major reasons for this failure being lack of experience with recently developed plans, policies, and procedures, and a shortage of time and energy to undertake such ambitious institutional research.

2. Another claim advanced for accreditation is that preparation for it is a process rather than an event. This is exactly how the staff members interviewed felt

about it.

They were convinced that in assembling, editing, and finally publishing the application for accreditation that new avenues of intra-school communication were created. It was their view that even if preparation for accreditation is not evaluative, it is informative, and that is value enough. The claim then, that educational improvements stem from the preparation for accreditation is supported only by this one point of view shared by most of those interviewed.

3. There is no doubt that participants viewed accreditation as a system of quality control. This was nearly unanimous opinion shared by all ranks of the members.

   They viewed an accrediting agency as a watchdog of standards. Even when they had been only superficially involved with both preparation and team visit, their view of the essential impact of the accreditation process was not altered. They strongly supported the claim that accreditation is a system of quality control.

4. It is their opinion that an accrediting agency values and respects diversity. When participants did view accreditation as an agent of conformity, they did so in a very positive way. They favored conformity if this meant a guarantee of minimal standards and recognition.

5. They strongly supported the claim that accreditation was best administered through an agency that represented higher education, but is not in control of it.

6. All universally agreed that the composition of the evaluating teams is of crucial importance to those who are to be judged by them. The claim is repeatedly made that evaluation by outsiders is valuable.

7. Evaluation reports are criticized for making minor or vague recommendations, or for suggesting that existing practices or policies be continued. With few exceptions, participants did not view the evaluation report as a motivating force that might bring about change.

8. Staff members had a difficult time in citing a single improvement that could be ascribed to the accreditation process.

9. Accreditation was viewed as valuable, though the claim that it is a powerful force in the direction of improvement is denied.

10. They viewed the attainment of status as the most important single value of accreditation.

11. CONCLUSION

Staff members are not concerned that accreditation implies standards. They understand the usefulness of the enforcement of standards, and they do not view accreditation as a force for conformity.

There is general agreement that accrediting teams do not have objective means of measuring quality, and, therefore, the composition of the team is perceived as being crucially important.

The evaluation report issued by the accrediting agency is felt to be anticlimactic, and of little use other than for public relations purposes.

Even though this study is not local, and by no means comprehensive, it might give an indication as to the views of the teachers and other personnel of the secondary schools.

Accreditation as a process, is, in the long run, an effective,

competent and uniform evaluative process of established and practical educational procedures and facilities. This does not necessarily mean that the entire accrediting procedure is necessarily valuable. It is the process which a school goes through in terms of self-evaluation and the preparation for accreditation which seems to be the effective and most valuable part of accreditation.

It was previously stated that the process itself would provide a school with enough self-knowledge to change or maintain any areas in its educational procedures. It is assumed that a school with knowledge of its deficiencies and strengths would set out to remedy the weaknesses. The "status" of accreditation or even less formal recognition would be a major impetus to do so.

Thus, a cause (the accrediting process) and effect (remedial activity) relationship would ensure improved educational programs.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

[1]W. James Kearney, "Hidden Values in Accreditation Procedures", Catholic School Journal, LXIV (September, 1964), 96.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 97.

[5]American Council on Education, Accredited Institutions of Higher Education (New York, Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1965), xii.

[6]Kearney, op. cit., p. 97.

[7]Richard P. Adams et al. "Should Accreditation Procedures be Extended to Include Institutional Quality Ratings?," Journal of Higher Education, XXXIV (April, 1963), 220.

[8]Raymond G. Wilson, "The Regional Accrediting Association and the Smaller High School," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, L (February, 1966), 78.

[9]Mary Glenn Wiley and Mayer N. Zald, "The Growth and Transformation of Educational Accrediting Agencies: An Explanatory Study in Social Control of Institutions," Sociology of Education, XLI (Winter, 1968), 43.

[10]John J. Collins, "Accreditation -- Aims and Perceptions, Junior College Journal, XXXVIII (December, 1967), 19 - 23.

CHAPTER VI

ACCREDITATION AND THE FUTURE

The review of the literature concerning accreditation points to seven areas of concern. These areas are not listed in order of importance, nor are they specific problems of a particular area.

They are presented as follows:

1. If consolidation is not possible, cooperation is essential for the effective management of a school district.

This first point indicates such tasks as sharing facilities, specialists and all other criteria with member schools in a specific area. This is especially the case where small high schools are not capable of meeting the criteria for accreditation by themselves.

2. Dissemination of information is necessary if the accrediting agency hopes to inform member schools of current research and the experiences of other schools in the area.

In this way, participating members of the accreditation process will be able to learn from each other as to methods and procedures used in education.

3. The minimum standard in terms of pupil enrollment is a problem which, as of yet, has not been solved.

Schools need an operating minimum of pupil enrollment.

It seems obvious that smaller schools will have difficulty meeting the requirements regarding facilities and qualified personnel. A minimum should be established to enable all schools to either consolidate or at least, cooperate regarding their facilities.

4. Establishment of criteria.

Each accrediting agency must establish their own criteria. These can be established in cooperation with interested groups such as parents, school boards, civic groups and the schools themselves.

5. Funding.

Without sufficient funds, the accrediting agency will be unable to employ qualified personnel to enable them to judge adequately and accurately the "quality" of a school. Whether the accrediting agency is mainly sponsored by the government or by the schools themselves is of little importance, as long as an efficient accrediting agency can be maintained.

6. Each school must be able to contract and hold a sufficient number of highly qualified personnel.

The improvement of education can only come about through the efforts and willingness of the teachers in the classroom. Innovations are accepted or rejected at the door of the classroom, not at the superintendent's desk.

7. Small Schools.

There will always be the problem of small high schools in areas which have no need of exhaustive facilities. This problem will probably always remain, and the difficulty of accrediting such schools is obvious.

It seems therefore, that the future of the process of accreditation depends primarily on these seven topics.

In this province accreditation must, first of all, be accepted as a recognized educational method by the teachers themselves.

Information concerning accreditation should be disseminated to the schools so that the teachers have some degree of knowledge of the process. All too often, accreditation is seen as the abolishment of a province-wide standard and a licence for the school to do what it pleases. This, as we have seen, is a fallacy.

Accreditation itself is synonymous with standards. It is through the application of criteria that accreditation is granted. Therefore, any appeal to the government for accreditation implies that the government has developed or will develop a set of criteria which will then be applied to the institution. A necessary part of a campaign to develop an accreditation system would therefore seem to be at least an outline of the specific means to be used in maintai ing (or gaining) quality of performance. The smaller unit seeking accreditation (e.g., a school board) might well be able to influence the nature of the accreditation by including such details in a proposal. There is little evidence that provincial governments have such performance criteria. The emphasis on

control of process and content alone is evidence of this.

The challenge is to approach accreditation in such a way that it presents advantages to all parties, while minimizing disadvantages and perception of lowered "standards."

It seems that while accreditation is a useful tool which enables schools to re-evaluate their entire series of programs, facilities and assets, it does have built-in difficulties which are quite difficult to resolve. These difficulties, such as the adherence to standards set down by central accrediting agencies, and the lack of an effective definition of "quality" in education tend to curb many accrediting methods.

The possible answer to this dilemma might be to maintain the process of accreditation agency. This would promote the advantages of accreditation while, at the same time eliminating the disadvantages. Thus, a school would undergo the same self-evaluation process as any school in an accrediting agency, but it would not be subjected to grading, quality determination, and outside criticism by uninvolved individuals. This is worthy of further investigation.

This system, if used honestly and objectively by a school could provide that school with most of the advantages of accreditation without the tedious tasks and activities which accompany it.

Membership, therefore, is not necessarily the greatest advantage of accreditation. It is felt that the use of the accrediting process will prove much more beneficial.

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Selden, William K. "A New Translation of an Old Testament," Educational Record, XLIX (Winter, 1968), pp. 109 - 115.

A good treatment of the effects of changes in the realm of accreditation. A treatment of national and international forces together with new patterns of growth and development all seem to have pressured a restructuring of the accrediting process.

Statler, Ellsworth Sheldon. "Recent Growth Patterns of Accreditation of Secondary Schools by the Regional Accrediting Associations," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, XLV (October, 1961), pp. 16 - 22.

An evaluation of the growth of the accreditation process through the years from 1906 to the present. The growth seems to be leading towards system-wide evaluation and with new criteria, system-wide accreditation.

Wiley, Mary Glenn and Mayer N. Zald. "The Growth and Transformation of Educational Accrediting Agencies: An Exploratory Study in Social Control of Institutions," Sociology of Education, XLI (Winter, 1968), pp. 36 - 56.

An excellent overview of accreditation starting from the process being developed as a means of social control to the present systems and agencies. Also, an analysis of the changes in standards which have evolved in two accrediting institutions.

Wilson, Raymond G. "The Regional Accrediting Associations and The Smaller High School," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, L (February, 1966), pp. 77 - 80.

An examination of the bases of accreditation, the problems of small high schools, and how to overcome them.

THESES

Bayshore, Gerald Carl. "The Selection, Training and Evaluation of Examiners in Selected Accrediting Associations." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1971.

A study done to determine whether or not selected accrediting agencies have developed procedures to insure that their examiners are well prepared for the tasks they must perform.

It was found that most were well prepared largely because of their individual professional competence, previous experience and positions held.

Bishop, Vernal Reid. "Study of Secondary School Accreditation in the United States." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Idaho, Idaho, 1972.

This study compared and contrasted the purposes, procedures and standards of state accrediting agencies for secondary schools. Other questions which were studied were per pupil expenditures and state enrollment.

It was determined that the principal purpose of accreditation throughout the study was to "stimulate improvement in the school program."

Ferster, Herbert Vernon. "Criteria for Excellence: A Content Analysis of Evaluation Reports By a Regional Accrediting Association." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of New York at Buffalo, New York, 1971.

The purpose of the study was to determine the operating criteria, the consistency of application of these criteria, and the nature of the recommendations for improvement.

The study saw the criteria which emerged as process criteria, and little attention was paid to the products of the educational system.

Georges, Erika. "The Economics of Accreditation." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of California and Los Angeles, California, 1971.

Two hypotheses were tested by means of historical information and collected data. These hypotheses were: a) that the purpose of accreditation is to provide information on the quality of institutions of higher education, and, simultaneously, an optimal environment for students. b) that the basic intent of accreditation is to serve the interests of a profession or faculty and administrators by eliminating competition and creating pecuniary and nonpecuniary monopoly rents.

Both hypotheses are rejected.

List, Marilyn Kaplan. "A Study of the Relationship Between Twenty-Seven Educational Innovations and Accreditation of Public Secondary Schools." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York Univeristy, New York, 1969.

This study attempted to determine whether the accrediting association was functioning as a change agent for innovation in its accrediting process by rewarding greater lengths of renewed accreditation to schools with larger numbers of innovations.

No consistent pattern of relationships could be determined.

Nichols, Neal Kenneth. "Secondary School Accreditation in Arizona." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, The University of Arizona, Arizona, 1972.

This study was centered around the relationship between the secondary schools and the universities concerning the accrediting procedures and especially the "visitor" who was involved in the actual liaison between high school and university.

The result was an emphasis on keeping the "visitor" unencumbered from political affiliations so that the educational work which was his duty would not falter.

Nye, Phares Steavens. "A Basic Assessment of the accredited Instruments, Activities, and Procedures Used By the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, North Carolina State University at Raleigh, North Carolina, 1972.

This study was done to establish the issues and concerns needing clarification in the accreditation instruments, activities and procedures used, and also to determine the extent of agreement or disagreement of the administrative officers as to the effect of the instruments, activities and procedures.

Many areas are pointed out which need clarification, but the general consensus is that they perceive accreditation as being a valuable improvement stimulus for occupational education.

Statler, Ellsworth Sheldon. "An Analysis of Current Secondary School Standards of State Agencies and Regional Accrediting Associations." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1960.

A good overview of the various standards of the accrediting agencies in the State of Ohio. Many prove to be very similar insofar as their aims and procedures are somewhat identical.

Regional accrediting agencies need to be reviewed and it seems that all areas of procedure and assessment are constantly undergoing technical problems.

Van Ness, Ross Howard. "The Role of Collective Negotiations in the Accreditation of High Schools by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, Michigan, 1970.

This study was conducted to ascertain whether collective negotiations had any effect on accreditation procedures in a specific area. The greatest single finding, apparently, was that negotiations posed a financial problem for accreditation procedures. A greater percentage of the school budget was allotted to teachers' salaries, leaving a smaller percentage for operating supplies, equipment, media center, and additional personnel.

Wininger, Robert Albert. "An analysis of Criteria Used in Accreditation Reports." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of California and Los Angeles, California, 1970.

This was an exploratory study to discover if there was any relationship between the information contained in the school accreditation reports and the term of accreditation, and to identify those related items.

The variables which were most highly correlated with accreditation were indicative of the "professionalism of the teaching staff, student-teacher ratios, and, to a lesser degree, student opinions about their school. It was also interesting to note that financial variables were not significantly related to the criterion in this study.

Ziemba, Walter Joseph. "Changes in the Policies and Procedures of the Accrediting Process of the Commission on College and Universities of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1909-1958." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, Michigan, 1966.

Changes in the accrediting procedures were identified according to their nature as innovations, modifications, or deletions; according to the effect as liberalizing, restricting, or inconsequential.

This study goes into the topic in great detail and the findings of the research are quite extensive, but very interesting.

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

Evaluative Criteria. Washington, D.C.: National Study of Secondary School Education, 1960.

This text is the established evaluative criteria which was drawn up by members of The New England Association, The Middle States Association, the North Central Association, The Southern Association, The Northwest Association, and The Western Association.

Evaluative Criteria for Elementary Schools in Utah. Utah: Utah State Board of Education, June, 1968.

A very good set of evaluative criteria which presents the philosophy of the schools and the criteria involved in evaluation. Even though this text involves elementary schools, its philosophy and its spirit can be applied through all the levels of education with only minor changes in format.

Ness, Frederick W. The Proper Role of the Institution in Accrediting. An Address given at the seminar on accreditation in the public interest. It was sponsored by the National Commission on Accrediting and the United States Office of Education. 1970.

A good critique of the process of accreditation which lists many of the problems of accreditation and the various inadequacies which the system presents. In spite of the many criticisms of the accrediting procedure, however, Ness still maintains that "it is still the best alternative that the academic mind has devised."

Procedures and Standards for Accreditation of Utah Elementary Schools. Salt Lake City: Utah State Department of Public Instruction, 1965.

A good text on elementary education and the standards and procedures which must be met in order to obtain accreditation. The document deals especially with areas of critical concern with regard to standards and the quality of education. The philosophy underlying this document is sound and can be adopted into the secondary school system.